

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, further examination is respectfully requested.

In item 1 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 15-18, 22-24, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Czerwinski (2003/0068064). Further, in item 2 on page 4 of the Office Action, claims 19 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Czerwinski. Moreover, in item 3 on pages 4-5 of the Office Action, claims 20, 21, 26, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Czerwinski in view of Saiki (U.S. 6,208,237). These rejections are believed clearly inapplicable to amended claims 15-28 for the following reasons.

In view of the Examiner's above-mentioned rejections, independent claim 15 has been amended to (1) include a limitation from dependent claim 16, and (2) include a minor clarification regarding the continuous closed loop formed by the inner-connecting edge and/or the outer-connecting edge of each of the roll sections. Specifically, claim 15 has been amended to recite "said roll sections are circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop." Moreover, claim 15 has been amended to recite "for each of said roll sections, at least one of said inner-connecting edge and said outer-connecting edge constitutes a straight edge, said straight edges of said roll sections together forming the continuous closed loop."

It is submitted that the above-mentioned amendments do not substantially change the scope of the claimed invention, since amendment 1 (see above) includes a previously presented limitation and amendment 2 (see above) includes a limitation which is a minor clarification regarding the formation of the continuous closed loop of amendment 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the above-mentioned amendments will not require further substantial consideration and/or a new search by the Examiner.

In view of the above-mentioned amendments and the following description of the suspension device, claims 15-28 are patentable over the Czerwinski reference. Amended independent claim 15 recites a suspension device including, in part: a plurality of roll sections and a plurality of boundary sections wherein each boundary section is arranged between an adjacent pair of roll sections so as to form a continuously alternating pattern of the roll sections and the boundary sections which form a continuous closed loop having a continuous surface, wherein the roll sections are circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop, wherein for

each of the roll sections, at least one of an inner-connecting edge and an outer-connecting edge constitutes a straight edge, and wherein the straight edges of the roll sections together form the continuous closed loop. It is noted that the inner-connecting edges and the outer-connecting edges of the roll sections connect to the inner member and the outer member, respectively, between which the suspension device spans.

According to the configuration mentioned above, the inner and/or outer connecting edges, of the roll sections circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop, constitute straight edges which together form the continuous closed loop. The straight edges which form the continuous closed loop are exemplified in present Fig. 2A. In addition, please note that the inner and/or outer connecting edges themselves are required to form the continuous closed loop. That is, claim 15 requires that a continuous closed loop is formed by the roll sections (e.g., 1b) themselves and not by any edges or surfaces of the boundary sections (e.g., 2).

Czerwinski fails to disclose or suggest that the inner and outer connecting edges connect to the inner and outer members, between which the suspension device spans, and Czerwinski fails to disclose or suggest that the inner and/or outer connecting edges of the roll sections are circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop, and that the inner and/or outer connecting edges constitute the straight edges which together form the continuous closed loop, as recited in claim 15.

Rather, Czerwinski teaches a neoprene surround for an electro-dynamic acoustical transducer. Specifically, Czerwinski teaches that the neoprene surround 15 includes an outer periphery 16 and an inner periphery 17, and is U-shaped and includes a plurality of radially distributed less-compressed areas 30 (see paragraph [0039], lines 4-6, paragraph [0041], lines 1-6, and Fig. 1). The outer periphery 16 and the inner periphery 17 connect to a mounting flange 12 and an outer periphery 19 of diaphragm 18 (see paragraph [0039], lines 6-8, and Fig. 1). Accordingly, the surround 15 forms a radially continuous U-shaped surface having areas 30 thereof which are less compressed as well as areas which are more compressed.

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner equates the inner member and the outer member, between which the suspension device of claim 15 spans, with the outer periphery 16 and the inner periphery 17 of the surround 15 of Czerwinski. Further, the Examiner equates the roll sections of claim 15 with the less-compressed areas 30 of Czerwinski. In addition, the Examiner equates the boundary sections of claim 15 with the areas between the less-compressed

areas 30 of Czerwinski. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position regarding the above-mentioned disclosures of Czerwinski for the reasons discussed below.

Specifically, it is noted that the outer periphery 16 and the inner periphery 17 of the surround 15 cannot be equated with the inner and outer members between which the suspension device of claim 15 spans, because the outer periphery 16 and the inner periphery 17 are part of the surround 15, but, on the other hand, the inner and outer members are not part of the suspension device of claim 15. Thus, if any correlation, at all, exists between the elements of claim 15 and the Czerwinski reference it is submitted that the mounting flange 12 and the outer periphery 19 must be equated with the inner member and the outer member between which the suspension device spans.

Further, the less-compressed areas 30 of Czerwinski cannot be said to include the inner and/or outer connecting edges of the roll sections circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop, and the inner and/or outer connecting edges that constitute the straight edges which together form the continuous closed loop, since, as illustrated in Fig. 1 of Czerwinski, the edges of the less-compressed areas 30 are interrupted (i.e., non-continuous) and do not constitute straight edges which together form the continuous closed loop. In other words, the less-compressed areas 30 of Czerwinski do not form the continuous closed loop, whereas the roll sections themselves of claim 15 each include an edge, wherein the edges of the roll sections together form the continuous closed loop (i.e., boundary section edges are not included to form the continuous closed loop).

Thus, in view of the above, the less-compressed areas 30 of Czerwinski do not include the inner and/or outer connecting edges of the roll sections circumferentially arranged in a continuous closed loop, and the inner and/or outer connecting edges that constitute the straight edges which together form the continuous closed loop. Accordingly, Czerwinski does not disclose or suggest the above-mentioned features of claim 15.

The Examiner cited the Saiki reference for teaching "first and second suspension devices (Figures 14-16, 63 and 64) arranged in a covering relation with respect to each other; wherein the first and second suspension devices (63 and 64) are circumferentially offset relative to one another (Col. 15, Lines 7-11)." However, the Saiki reference does not disclose or suggest any of the above-discussed features of independent claim 15 which are lacking from the Czerwinski

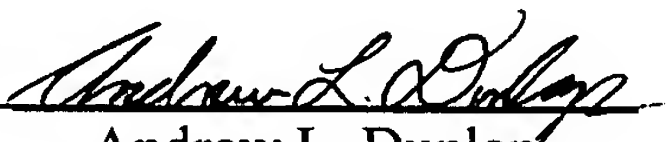
reference. As a result, the combination of the Czerwinski and Saiki references fail to render obvious the invention of independent claim 15.

Accordingly, it is submitted that a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would not have found it obvious to modify the Czerwinski reference in such a manner as to result in, or otherwise render obvious the present invention as recited in claims 15-28. Thus, claims 15-28 are clearly allowable over the Czerwinski reference and any combination of the references of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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